

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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### EARLY HUNTING SEASON FRAMEWORKS FOR MIGRATORY BIRDS SET

Final regulations setting the 1980-81 hunting frameworks for certain migratory birds have been published by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The rulemaking, published in the July 22, 1980, Federal Register, sets forth the outer limits for dates and times when shooting may begin and end and for the number of birds that may be taken and possessed during early hunting seasons (those that open before October 1). State wildlife officials may now select season dates and daily bag and possession limits from within these frameworks.

The early season regulations cover mourning doves, white-winged doves, band-tailed pigeons, rails, woodcock, common snipe, and gallinules; teal in portions of the Mississippi and Central Flyways during September; sea ducks in designated areas of the Atlantic Flyway; ducks in Iowa in late September; sandhill cranes in portions of North and South Dakota; and falconry seasons in certain States meeting Federal falconry standards.

Changes made for this group of birds include:

--An option to increase sandhill crane seasons in McLean and Sheridan counties, North Dakota, from 5 to 9 days to occur during September 6-14, and to increase the season length from 5 to 9 days to be selected during September 1-28 in five South Dakota counties. The modifications would help to alleviate crop depredation problems and shift hunting pressure to the lesser sandhill crane subspecies.

--An option for full-day mourning dove hunting in the Eastern Management Unit (all States east of the Mississippi River and Louisiana). Full-day hunting has been employed in the Central and Western Management Units for many years without detriment to the mourning dove population.

--An option to establish three hunting zones in Texas (Panhandle, Central, and Rio Grande) instead of the two zones (North and South) previously used; to delay the opening of the mourning dove season in the Central Zone; and to permit two white-winged doves to be included in the bag during the mourning dove season in the Rio Grande Zone. In Arizona, as an alternative to a 50-day hunting season with bag limits of 10 mourning doves and 10 white-winged doves as in previous years, the State would have the option of selecting, in specifically designated white-winged dove management units, a season of 70 half days with an aggregate daily bag limit of 12 mourning and white-winged doves, in which no more than 6 could be white-winged doves. The possession limit would be double

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